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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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TAGS

TO Department of State

Dept.

Pass : Asunción, Brasilia, Montevideo, Santiago

E.O. : GDS

TAGS : SHUM, AR

FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES DATE March 17, 1978

SUBJECT Reported Disappearances in Argentina

REF

This Airgram transmits a graph of the monthly numbers of disappearances reported to the American Embassy at Buenos Aires and the Argentine human rights organization--Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos (FDD). Many of these disappearances have been reported to both institutions. For the period from late 1974 through 1977 the Embassy has received information on 782 disappearances and the FDD has published information on 1,602 cases.

There are a number of points which should be kept in mind in evaluating the graph:

-- The disappearance reports are only an indicator of the relative rate of terrorist/illegal activity in Argentina. Statistics give no indication of the total numbers of persons who have disappeared in Argentina as we have no guidelines on what percentage of families have registered their disappeared family members with the Embassy and the FDD. We can declare nothing about total disappearances from this information.

-- As both information collection points are located in Buenos Aires, the data is geographically biased. The graph is more descriptive of the relative changes in the number of disappearances in the country's major population area centered around the federal capital.

Enclosure: Graph (1)

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-- The information suffers from a serious time lag problem. Families are generally reluctant to report disappearances to outside organizations, such as the Embassy or the FDD until several months have passed.

-- The high December, 1977 Embassy disappearance figure reflects reports which only the Embassy received from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees local office of the disappearance of 15 Uruguayan refugees living in Buenos Aires.

Despite these limitations, the statistics indicate a definite downtrend in reported disappearances. The sharp dip in October and November, 1977 prior to Secretary Vance's visit is of interest, but not conclusive. The relatively good fit between the curves indicates that the Embassy is receiving comparable information to that of a well-known local human rights organization.

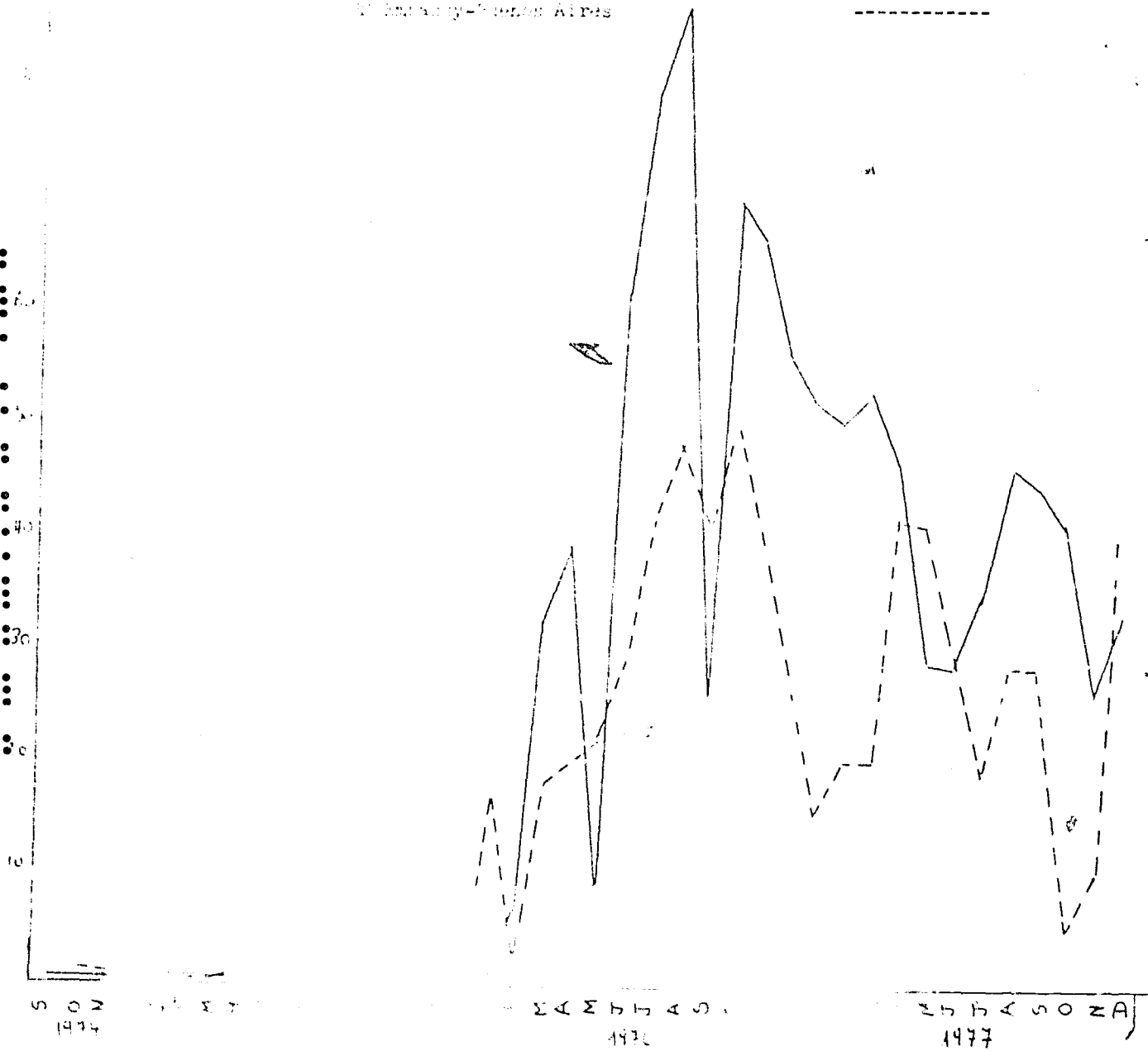
CASTRO Vic

DISAPPEARANCES IN ARGENTINA REPORTED TO: APA (September 1974-December 1977)

"[illegible] de Desaparecidos y Detenidos" _____

[illegible]-Buenos Aires ----------

Buenos Aires AJ3



March 16, 1978.